

WWW Q&A

I'm new to the World Wide Web. How do I start finding interesting sites?

There are a number of good places to start. The least random approach is to use a searchable directory already organized into generalized topic areas. Yahoo! is probably the pre-eminent example. The Yahoo! directory contains Web site information organized by topic areas, such as Business and Science. Searching within a specific topic area may lead you directly to sites containing the information you



Mark Jenkins

seek. Yahoo! is available at <http://www.yahoo.com> or under the "Net Directory" button within the Netscape browser.

The second least random approach is to search for the sites that might be of direct interest to you. You can perform a word search on virtually any topic that might be covered within a Web site. There are a number of search tools available, as discussed in a previous column (see *WWW Q&A, Inter@ctive Week*, June 19, page 48). A quick way to get to several search engines if you're using the Netscape browser is to use the "Net Search" button.

If you're more interested in surf-

ing for the newest sites, but are not sure where to start, there is help. The makers of the two most popular Web browsers maintain "What's New" areas that announce newly available Web sites. Netscape, the maker of the Netscape Navigator browser, maintains its new-site listing at <http://home.netscape.com/home/whats-new.html>, which is where the "What's New!" button built into the Netscape browser will take you. The maker of Mosaic, NCSA (the National Center for Supercomputing Applications), maintains a "What's New" area at <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/Docs/whats-new.html>. The new sites are typically a

mix of commercial and non-commercial sites spanning every imaginable topic, mirroring the breadth of the Net itself.

NCSA also maintains an excellent page of starting points, not surprisingly called "Starting Points For Internet Exploration," at <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/StartingPoints/NetworkStartingPoints.html>, which lists an extensive number of different data sources, including a few university Web sites and many non-Web information sources.

Please send any Net and Web questions to tdark1@ix.netcom.com.

WEBPRENEUR PROFILE

NAME: Gary Kremen

AGE: 31

BORN: Chicago

RESIDES: San Francisco

ORG: Electric Classifieds Inc.

RANK: Founder, CEO, president

BUSINESS: Classified ads on the Web

SITE: <http://www.match.com>

HOBBIES: Camping, amateur radio

Gary Kremen jokes that he began to put personal ads on the Web, because he wanted to find the best woman in the world. "I'd just put all the women in a database, then I'd just sort it and marry the best one," says Kremen, a former software engineer whose free Match.Com service today has 10,000 registered users.

"Now I'm so busy, I don't have time to use the service," he notes ironically. "But we've already had a couple of engagements."

Kremen and the 15 employees at

Electric Classifieds Inc. are not simply making matches.

Match.Com is the first service of Electric Classifieds, which has a broader vision of putting newspaper classifieds on the Web.

The company, which received \$1.7 million in venture capital in October 1994, launched Match.Com because



Kremen: Touch of classifieds

it demonstrated Electric Classifieds' technology and wouldn't freak out newspaper publishers.

"It's not a frontal attack," says Kremen, noting that employment and real estate categories — future services planned by Electric Classifieds — generate more classified revenue. "We're not in their face."

Kremen touts Electric Classifieds' technology (in which he has invested \$1 million), which personalizes Web pages for each user.

Some changes are detected by technology, such as the kind of browser used.

Match.Com remains free. But once the service hits 25,000 users, it will charge for transmitting anonymous e-mail messages between users — not for ads or access to the site.

The site's graphics were designed by a woman, and women market the service: Director of Marketing Fran Maier hails from consumer marketing jobs, including a position as a brand manager at Clorox. The service uses a "dirty words" filter to make it safer.

By early 1996, Electric Classifieds expects to run Jobs.Com, Housing.Com, and Autos.Com, all based on content from newspapers and ad agencies that specialize in classifieds. The model is to be a service bureau and an aggregator of ads into a common database that site visitors can draw upon.

With all that ahead, Kremen may not find his perfect woman any time soon.